

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 SAJ-01 SAM-01 IO-14 SSC-01 OMB-01

AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01

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P R 071015Z JUN 74

FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2691

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 0424

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT POLI AO

SUBJECT: ANGOLA'S NEW GOVERNOR GENERAL

1. SILVINO SILVERIO MARQUES WILL BE ANGOLA'S NEW GOVERNOR GENERAL, ACCORDING TO JUNE 7 LUANDA PRESS. HE IS TO TAKE OATH OF OFFICE IN LISBON TODAY AND ARRIVE LUANDA BY JUNE 10, PORTUGAL'S NATIONAL HOLIDAY (FOR WHICH NO CEREMONIES SCHEDULED HERE, YET.)

2. RUMOR HAS IT PRESIDENT SPINOLA MAY ACCOMPANY HIM, GOING ON TO LOURENCO MARQUES WITH MOZAMBIQUE'S NEW GOVGEN SOARES DE MELO. SPINOLA ALSO HAS BEEN INVITED TO VISIT LUSAKA WHILE IN GENERAL VICINTY.

3. SILVERIO MARQUES, ARMY GENERAL, WAS BORN NAZARE, PORTUGAL 56 YEARS AGO. SERVED AS GOVGEN ANGOLA (WITH MILITARY RANK OF LT. COL.) FROM 1962-66. DURING THAT TIME HE DEVELOPED REPUTATION FOR INTRODUCING NEW MEASURES OF "SOCILA JUSTICE," EUPHEMISM FOR GREATER RIGHTS FOR BLACKS. UNDER HIS STEWARDSHIP INSULTING PRACTICES OF PAST WERE DISCOURAGED, E.G. CUSTOM OF ADDRESSING BLACKS IN DENIGRATING FASHION (USE OF "THOU" - WHICH STILL
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PERSISTS AMONG LOWER CLASS WHITES, BUT NOW SCRUPULOUSLY AVOIDED

BY OFFICIALS). SILBERIO MARQUES ALSO DRAMATIZED ELEVATED STATUS OF NON-WHITES BY NAMING A MESTIZO AS PROVINCIAL SECRETARY OF EDUCATION.

4. COMMENT: SILVERIO MARQUES IN PAST TWO WEEKS HAS BECOME EVERYMAN'S CANDIDATE. BLACKS AND MESTIZOS SEE HIM AS "NEUTRAL" AS BETWEEN VARIOUS FACTIONS, AND DEFENDER THEIR RIGHTS AGAINST WHITE-SEPARATIST ELEMENTS. LATTER SEE HIM AS BETTER THAN MOST OF POTENTIAL CANDIDATES, CERTAINLY PREFERABLE TO SEVERAL MESTIZOS MENTIONED AS POSSIBILITIES AND ALSO "LIBERAL" WHITES. THOSE PRO-OLD REGIME RECALL HE WAS FIRM SALAZARIST. MORE IMPORTANT, HE IS BROTHER OF JUNTA MEMBER AND THEREFORE PRESUMED TO BE CLOSE TO POWER CENTER IN PORTUGAL -- I.E., HE MAY BE ABLE TO ACT WITH AUTHORITY AND HOPE-FULLY MORE THAN FILL UNCOMFORTABLE VACUUM IN LEADERSHIP EXISTING HERE FOR SIX WEEKS. AS ARMY OFFICER HE WILL ALSO BRING REASSURANCE TO THOSE FEARFUL OF POTENTIAL UNREST AND VIOLENCE HERE.

5. THERE IS AN UNDERCURRENT OF UNEASE ATTENDING THIS APPOINTMENT, HOWEVER. MANY PEOPLE HERE, INCLUDING NON-WHITES, HAVE DIFFICULTY RECALLING EXACTLY WHAT SILVERIO MARQUES ACCOMPLISHED OTHER THAN TO GAIN THE CONFIDENCE OF SOME AFRICANS (WHICH AT LEAST SOME OF OUR CONTACTS SAY IS OVERRATED ANYWAY). HE WAS RELATIVELY JUNIOR MILITARY OFFICER UNQUESTIONABLY SUBSERVIENT TO GENERAL ANDRADE E SILVA, CINC DURING MOST OF HIS TOUR. HE ALSO WAS CONSIDERED "SAFE" APPOINTMENT FOLLOWING DESLANDES WHO, THOUGH HERO TO MANY, UPSET EQUAL NUMBER OF LOCALS (AND LISBON) BY HIS ENERGY AND LEADERSHIP.

6. I CAN DISTINCTLY RECALL THAT WHEN REBOCHO VAZ WAS ELEVATED TO GOVGEN FROM BEING DISTRICT GOVERNOR OF UIGE, BOTH LISBON AND LUANDA ANTICIPATED HE WOULD BRING TO JOB PRESTIGE, LEADERSHIP AND ACTIVISM SO OBVIOUSLY LACKING DURING SILVERIO MARQUES' TENTURE. SYMPTOMATIC OF SILVERIO MARQUES APPARENT LACK OF PURPOSE WAS IMPRESSION HE GAVE VISITING AMERICAN AMBASSADOR ANDERSON AND MYSELF IN 1964, WHEN DURING OUR INITIAL MEETING WITH HE CONFINED HIMSELF ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY TO SMALL TALK AND REMINISCENCES ABOUT HAPPY DAYS IN CABO VERDE, BY IMPLICATION MORE TO HIS TASTE THAN BIG JOB IN ANGOLA. JOKE THEN CURRENT IN LUANDA WAS THAT SILVERIO MARQUES ALWAYS LOOKED SO "TIRED" BECAUSE HE WAS SO PRODUCING

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CHILDREN - THEN NUMBERING AROUND 12.

7. SILVERIO MARQUES IS NOW A SENIOR MILITARY OFFICER. PERHAPS HE WILL HAVE HAD TIME TO TOUGHEN UP, THE PRIME QUALITY NEEDED TO MANAGE THE POLITICAL SCENE HERE AND PREPARE ANGOLA FOR PLEBISCITE IN AN ORDERLY FASHION.

BRIGGS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, DEPENDENCY GOVERNOR
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 JUN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: smithrj
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LUANDA00424
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740145-0192
From: LUANDA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740665/aaaaceei.tel
Line Count: 114
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: smithrj
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 MAY 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <24 FEB 2003 by smithrj>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ANGOLA'S NEW GOVERNOR GENERAL
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, AO, (SILVERIO MARQUES, SILVINO), (SPINOLA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005